

W. C. C. R. R.

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AND
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
WESTERN
VERMONT RAILROAD,
AND THE
DISTRICT THROUGH WHICH IT RUNS.

NEW-YORK:

GEORGE F. NESBITT & CO., STATIONERS AND PRINTERS, TONTINE BUILDING,
CORNER OF WALL AND WATER STREETS.

1852.

THE WESTERN VERMONT RAILROAD.

THE western section of Vermont, lying between the Green Mountains and Lake Champlain, is a region of great natural beauty and fertility, and abounding in mineral wealth. Its surface is mainly occupied by the valleys of Otter Creek and of the Battenkill, and by a chain of hills which, commencing south of the broad part of Lake Champlain, and running nearly parallel to the Green Mountains, forms the western border of these valleys to the southern part of the State. The eastern slope of these hills is mostly composed of strata of limestone and marble; and the western slope of the Green Mountains contains valuable beds of iron ore, manganese, yellow ochre, porcelain clay, and glass sand. The traffic arising from the development of these branches of industry, and from the varied and never-failing products of the well-cultivated soil of the district, can only be carried on through the valleys of Otter Creek and the Battenkill, which rivers take their rise within a few rods of one another, in a meadow in the town of Dorset. The former pursues a north and northwest course, to Lake Champlain; the latter

runs southwest, into the Hudson. Both rivers have a slow current, with no great fall of water ; but the mountain streams which fall into them from either side, afford great facilities for water-power, which are amply availed of, by the enterprising inhabitants, in turning to marketable shapes the products of the Green Mountain forests, and of their invaluable mineral resources. The traffic through these valleys is accommodated and extended by a chain of railroad communication, whose principal lines are the Rutland and Burlington, and the Western Vermont Railroads. The former railroad extends from Rutland, north, along Otter Creek Valley, sixty-seven miles, to Lake Champlain, at Burlington, where it communicates with the railroad and steamboat lines to Montreal and Ogdensburg.

The WESTERN VERMONT RAILROAD has its northern terminus at the East Rutland Depot, of the Rutland and Burlington, and Rutland and Whitehall Lines, which here concentrate in a trunk line and stretch over the Green Mountains to Bellows' Falls and Boston. *Rutland* is an old and wealthy town, ranking as the second in agricultural produce, and the first in mineral productions in the State. The opening of the different railroads which unite here, has given a new and powerful impetus to the prosperity of this town. Large manufactures of iron, leather, cabinet furniture, marble, slate and slate-pencils, are in operation, and getting under way here, and the town is doubling in population, at the rate of once in three years. It is distant fifty-two miles from

Bellows' Falls, and twenty-five from Whitehall, and the extensive machine-shops and engine-houses of the railroad are located at this point, where all the lines come together. The marble works here surpass in magnitude those of any other town in the United States. From Rutland the *Western Vermont Railroad* runs, straight as the crow flies, six miles, south-by-west, through the rich level meadows that here extend, nearly a mile in width, on the east side of Otter Creek. Passing near the village of Clarendon, situated on a rising ground on the left, the road continues its southerly course, through similar intervalles, three miles, to the thriving village of Wallingford, and five miles further, near South Wallingford, it crosses to the left bank of Otter Creek. Marble quarries are here opened, close to the railroad, and are the first the traveler will have seen since leaving Rutland, though marble is quarried and sawn along the whole range of hills which extend from Rutland to Bennington, flanking the railroad on the west; but the works are generally carried on in nooks a little hidden from the view of the railroad passenger, along the brooks and streams that descend into the valley, from these hills.

Four miles further south, the road passes on the left of the village of Danby borough, where large quantities of marble are piled up for forwarding to all parts of the Union and Canada. Some of the marble of this district is found in pure white statuary layers; and other strata in the same quarries are sawn into slabs, for head-stones, of all shades,

from white to blue, many of which take a perfect polish. Other layers are mostly worked for ashler or building-stone. Specimens of the celebrated Verd Antique, or Serpentine marble, for this purpose, can be seen to advantage in Dr. Mason's buildings, in Brooklyn, and other splendid erections in that city and New-York. This district is likewise famous for its butter and cheese; and its neat farm residences, and well cultivated fields, and luxuriant pastures, plainly indicate that the broad-brims have an honest regard for their own family comforts, as well as a determination to maintain the deserved reputation of the Danby dairies. A bank has lately been established here, and the Treasurer's offices of the railroad are in the same building. The road now continues on eight miles south, to Dorset, passing for two miles along and over Dorset Pond, formerly a sheet of water of considerable width; but its dimensions have been much reduced by recent drainage.

The mountains here approach near together, and the scenery becomes wild and magnificent. A little south of the pond the road crosses the meadow where the Battenkill and Otter Creek take their rise, the former of which streams is now, for some miles, hugged by the railroad as closely as Otter Creek has hitherto been. From Dorset, where there are works for smelting the iron ore of this district, the railroad keeps on south-by-west five miles, passing the busy village of *Factory Point*, with its manufactures of wool, marble, and leather; and one mile further, the pleasant town of Manchester. Both are on the right

of the road, and somewhat elevated above its level. Near Manchester is a large stone collegiate institution, built about 1830, from funds left for this purpose by Mr. Burr, a wealthy citizen of that place. The country here widens out again, and the farms and buildings, on either side of the road, for five miles, to Sunderland, and three more, to the beautiful village of Arlington, all indicate the well-being and well-doing of the community. Marble quarries continue to be worked all along the line to Shaftsbury, which is six miles south of Arlington, and, like it, situated on the right of the railroad.

Four miles more of a southwest course carry the railroad through the village of North Bennington, where there are several thriving mills for the manufacture of wool, cotton, and hardware. Two miles further on, the road reaches the line dividing the States of New-York and Vermont, and the cars proceed over the Troy and Bennington and Troy and Boston Railroads, to Troy, Albany, and New-York.

From North Bennington a line branches off a little north of the village, and runs south-by-east four and a half miles to its terminus in Bennington. This is a large and wealthy place, containing many manufacturies of cottons, woollens, pottery, and porcelain, iron, and leather.

A charter has been obtained for the Bennington and New-York Railroad; and a road will be built under it from Bennington, through Pownal and Williamsburgh, and Lebanon Springs, to the New-York and Harlem Railroad, at Chatham Four Corners.

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The WESTERN VERMONT RAILROAD COMPANY was organized in 1850, and by the zealous assistance of the inhabitants along the line, it has been already nearly completed, and the entire work will be finished in a space of little over two years from the date of the company's organization.

The road has been built in a most substantial manner, with heavy T-rail, laid upon ties only two feet apart, and its masonry is massive and imposing. The grades are nearly level, nowhere exceeding, we believe, forty feet to a mile, and that for a small part of the way ; and there are very few curves. The expense was estimated, at first, at about \$17,000 per mile, including engines and cars : and the present nearly finished state of the road has enabled the officers to fully verify their estimates. The favorable nature of the country—the abundance of excellent material all along the route, and the strict economy practised in this work by the Directors, who all reside on the line and are large subscribers to its stock—have enabled them to build and equip, at a cost of about \$900,000, a railroad extending fifty-eight miles in length, including its Bennington branch.

Its opening will be the commencement of a new era for Western Vermont. It will accommodate and largely add to its traffic, and will increase to the citizens of our seaboard towns, and to the traveling public, the facilities of access to one of the most delightful regions, for summer rambles and residences, to be found in America.